

METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR CAPTURING AND STORING
UNMANNED AIRCRAFT, INCLUDING METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR
SECURING THE AIRCRAFT AFTER CAPTURE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application claims priority to pending U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/440,846, filed January 17, 2003 and incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure describes methods and apparatuses for capturing, recovering, disassembling, and storing unmanned aircraft, including methods and apparatuses for securing the aircraft after capture.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Unmanned aircraft or air vehicles (UAVs) provide enhanced and economical access to areas where manned flight operations are unacceptably costly and/or dangerous. For example, unmanned aircraft outfitted with remotely controlled cameras can perform a wide variety of surveillance missions, including spotting schools of fish for the fisheries industry, monitoring weather conditions, providing border patrols for national governments, and providing military surveillance before, during and/or after military operations.

[0004] Existing unmanned aircraft systems suffer from a variety of drawbacks. For example, existing unmanned aircraft systems (which can include the aircraft itself along with launch devices, recovery devices, and storage devices) typically require substantial space. Accordingly, these systems can be difficult to install and operate in cramped quarters, such as the deck of a small fishing boat, land vehicle, or other craft. Another drawback with some existing unmanned aircraft is